DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 293 093 CS 009 094

TITLE	Workplace Literacy. Focused Access to Selected Topics (FAST) Bibliography No. 1.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	RCS-FAST-BIB-1
PUB DATE	88
CONTRACT	RI88062001
NOTE	4p.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Adult Literacy; Adult Reading Programs; *Annotated Bibliographies; Basal Reading; Functional Literacy; *Job Skills; Labor Education; Reading Ability; Reading Skills; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	*Job Related Literacy; Reading Management

ABSTRACT

Compiled to assist those who are interested in building better workplace literacy programs, the first ERIC/RCS FAST (Focused Access to Selected Topics) Bibliography is a selection of representative documents from searches of the ERIC database. The bibliography is divided into the following groups: eight sources that provide an overview of concerns about workplace literacy; five general background sources; five sources which help define workplace literacy; and five descriptions of programs/projects. A brief annotation accompanies each item. (JK)

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Focused Access to Selected Topics
a bibliography by the
Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

Workplace Literacy

FAST BIB No. 1 RCS

The relationship between adequate command of language skills and success in the workplace has become a major focus in further development of literacy in the United States. Numerous studies have clarified the importance of a command of language in holding a job and advancing oneself.

A recent 50-page guidebook published by the U.S. Education, Labor, and Commerce departments is designed to help business, education, and local governments identify workplace literacy problems and to establish sound programs to upgrade labor force literacy. In releasing the guidebook in March, 1988, Secretary of Education William Bennett stressed that education does not stop with the nation's schools and that industry must take an active role in training workers today for the future.

Many adult literacy programs are now stressing the use of job-related materials because research has demonstrated as low as 25 percent shared variance across different settings. Many experts now stress that the literacy adults developed as students needs modification in the workplace, particularly as that setting is changed by automation and other factors. Another related finding is that job literacy requires integrating reading, writing, and computational skills for problem solving.

The emerging clarity of what is being learned in adult literacy programs and research has led to new interest and initiatives, including Federal support to implement what we know in ever-stronger adult literacy programs. Several funding opportunities were announced by Federal agencies in early 1988 and are listed in the *ERIC/RCS Newsletter*, May, 1988.

About this bibliography

This first *ERIC/RCS FAST Bibliography* has been compiled to assist those who are interested in building better workplace literacy programs. The bibliography is a selection of representative documents from searches of the ERIC database. The particular search designs used can be acquired by writing RCS at the address on the back of this bibliography.

The documents cited here have been grouped into several general categories, and some of the abstracts which accompany them in the database have been edited and reduced to allow for the inclusion of more entries in this bibliography. Some sources included in one category may also treat additional perspectives of workplace literacy.

The citations in the box at the right are to sources that can give a quick overview of workplace literacy. The ED numbers for sources announced in *Research in Education (RIE)* are given in brackets following citations from *RIE* throughout so that users can go directly to microfiche collections.

Copies of most sources cited from *RIE* can be ordered from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) at 3900 Wheeler Avenue; Alexandria, Virginia 22304 or by phoning (703) 823-0500 or (800) 227-3742. The charge is $1.94 for 1-25 pages and for each additional 1-25 pages. Microfiche are available for $.75 per title up to five cards and $.15 for each additional card. Articles cited in *CIJE* can be acquired most economically from library collections or by means of interlibrary loan. Alternatively, reprint services are available from University Microfilms International (UMI) and the Original Article Tearsheet Service (OATS) of the Institute for Scientific Information.

Sources that provide an overview of concerns about Workplace Literacy

The bottom line. Washington, DC: Division of Adult Education, Education Department, 1988.
This 50-page booklet offers practical information to help business and industry apply proven basic skills training practices as the solution of work force literacy problems.

Eurich, Nell P. *Corporate classrooms: the learning business*. A Carnegie Foundation Special Report. Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1985. [ED 264 785]
This historical review of business- and industry-based education in the U.S. includes consideration of four "dimensions of the corporate learning enterprise": in-house educational programs, educational and training facilities, degree-granting institutions, and the satellite university. It covers a broad scope of the aspects relevant to successful programs, with details on 18 corporate education institutions.

Fields, Ernest L. "Industry-based programs: a growing source for adult literacy development," *Lifelong Learning, 10* (1), September, 1986, pp. 7-9.
In reviewing and classifying adult literacy skills needed in industry and in describing nine industry-based literacy programs, this article treats industry's perceptions of literacy needs.

A history of the Adult Education Act. Washington, D.C.: National Advisory Council on Adult Education, 1980. [ED 245 098]
Places the Adult Education Act in a chronological narrative of the Federal role in adult education for federal employees, in labor force development programs, and in programs to develop literacy and basic skills. It gives background and descriptions of other legislation relevant to adult education and of amendments to the Adult Education Act.

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Kirsch, Irwin S., and Jungeblut, Ann. *Literacy: profiles of America's young adults.* Princeton, New Jersey: National Assessment of Educational Progress at Educational Testing Service, 1987. [ED 275 692] See also same title, Final Report, 1987. [ED 275 701]

This NAEP report defines the literacy needs of youth entering the job force as more task-oriented and related to problem solving than our schools may recognize.

Mikulecky, Larry. "Literacy task analysis: defining and measuring occupational literacy demands." Paper presented at the National Adult Educational Research Association in Chicago, 1985. [ED 262 206]

Defines workplace or job literacy as considerably different from literacy demands on students and discusses the implications of the differences for training and measurement. Reports that workplace literacy requires the development of metacognitive skills.

Philippi, Jorie W. "Matching literacy to job training: some applications from military programs," *Journal of Reading, 31* (7), April, 1988, pp. 658-666.

Presents the research case for using job materials for literacy programs and provides brief guidelines for reading specialists interested in helping to develop such programs.

Sticht, Thomas G., and Mikulecky, Larry. *Job-related basic skills: cases and conclusions*, Columbus, Ohio: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1984. [ED 246 312]

Discusses workplace literacy as reading, writing, and computational ability. It presents case studies of three basic skills training progams, including the Department of Defense Functional Literacy project, and describes job-related basic skills requirements of the workplace while exploring ways of developing and improving the reading, writing, and computational abilities of workers.

General background sources

Chang, Kathryn L. "Occupational literacy: an overview," *Lifelong Learning, 11* (1), September, 1987, pp. 19-22.

Reviews studies which support the contention that the ability to read is a fundamental vocational skill in American society.

Hunter, John M. *Contributions and shortfalls: economic analysis and non-formal education*, East Lansing, Michigan: Non-Formal Education Information Center, Michigan State University, 1981. [ED 242 461]

Discusses the problems inherent in evaluating the success of an adult education program and in weighing its social, psychological, and economic benefits against the cost of designing and administering such a program.

Jones, Barry O., "Teaching basic skills for the information age," *Unicorn, Journal of the Australian College of Education, 12* (2), May, 1986, pp. 75-80.

Stresses the need for adult literacy initiatives to accommodate society's shift from industrial production to increasingly service-oriented work functions and to broaden the educational experiences of the labor force as a lifetime approach of self-growth.

Mikulecky, Larry. "Job literacy: the relationship between school preparation and workplace actuality," *Reading Research Quarterly, 17* (3), 1982, pp. 400-419

Reports on the examination of the literacy demands, competencies, and strategies present in the daily reading of students and workers to determine that academic literacy is not all the literacy preparation the workplace may require.

Rush, T.; Moe, A.; and Storlie, R. *Occupational Literacy Education*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1986. [ED 270 728]

Intended for teachers of adult literacy courses, this book focuses on development of written and oral language competencies required in occupational and training settings.

Sources which help define workplace literacy

Flanagan, W. Malcolm. *Computerized vocational objectives manual and data bank for students with special needs: a user's manual and comprehensive data bank of over 3,000 vocational entry and exit level objectives designed for special needs learners*. Columbia, Missouri: Department of Practical Arts and Vocational-Technical Education, Missouri University, 1984. [ED 259 166]

Describes competencies for a broad range of occupational areas.

Mikulecky, Larry. "Literacy for the workplace." In *Reading Across the Life-Span*. S. Yussen and M. C. Smith, (eds.), New York City: Springer-Verlag, *in press*.

Reviews and synthesizes recent research, giving particular attention to what is known about the literacy demands in the workplace and about the abilities of various segments of the adult and adolescent populations.

Noe, Katherine Schlick. "Technical reading technique: a briefcase reading strategy," *Journal of Reading, 27* (3), December, 1983, pp. 234-237.

Argues that on-the-job reading makes special demands upon readers; presents a technical reading strategy that involves a five-step prereading checklist and four post-reading analyses.

Schall, Jeanne *et al.* "Competence and careers: a study relating competencies acquired in college to career options for the liberal arts graduate." In *Lifelong Learning Research Conference Proceedings* (7th), Rivera, William M. *et al.* (eds.) College Park, Maryland: Department of Agriculture and Extension Education, Maryland University, 1985. [ED 259 102]

Discusses career competencies in relation to broader, more traditional conceptions of literacy.

Valentine, T. "Issues central to the definition of adult functional literacy." Paper prepared for the Office of Higher Education and Adult Learning of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the United States Department of Education, 1986.

In dealing with the issues, this paper becomes an excellent source of definitions.

Descriptions of Programs/Projects

Conklin, Nancy Faires, and Reder, Stephen. *Changing channels: a guide to functional literacy for the automated workplace*, Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1985. [ED 264 395]

This paper was designed to assist educators and employers in planning curricula in language and communication skills for students and employees entering or

experiencing a transition to, automated work settings. It includes information on training for functional literacy and competency skills and training delivery models.

"Guidelines for developing an educational program for worker literacy." Boston: Massachusetts State Executive Department, 1986. [ED 284 071]

These guidelines were developed to assist a variety of agencies, businesses, unions, and other groups cooperating to provide educational programs emphasizing literacy appropriate to the workplace.

Mark, Jorie Lester. "Private sector providers of basic skills training in the workplace: a study of the general training and basic skills responses of randomly selected companies which provide basic skills training to their employees," Washington, DC: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 1984.

Reports on responses from 41 companies to a questionnaire that helps define the kinds of adult education programs they were running, gives data on the employees in the programs, and discusses the extent of the training, the nature of the training, and the methods of financing the programs.

Mark, Jorie Lester, and Murphy, Garrett. "The basic skills: business/union connection," Washington, DC: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, 1985 (rvd.) [ED 266 284]

Reports on a questionnaire returned by 31 state directors of adult education on the affiliations between adult basic education programs and business, industry, and unions. Outlines the contributions to programs by business and industry as second to the funding support of the Adult Education Act. Discusses the space, equipment, dollars, counseling, and staff needed for effective programs.

Monk, Virginia. "Vocational English in British Columbia: the state of the art," *TESL-Talk*, *13* (4), Fall, 1982, pp. 24-38.

Summarizes the common elements, successes, and problems encountered by programs designed to improve vocational English skills in the labor force. The programs – some of which were operated by specific firms and unions – include pre-employment training and on-the-job components.

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OERI **Office of Educational Research and Improvement U.S. Department of Education**

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI88062001. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.